



2/8 AMERICA'S BATTALION

FAMILY READINESS NEWSLETTER

2/8 America's battalion

Battalion Commander's Comments



Families of "America's Battalion",

Task Force 2/8 is currently operating in Northern Marjah and Sangin, Afghanistan. The Sergeant Major and I are very proud of the Marines and the job they are doing. The turnover period the small unit leaders spent with 2/9 was very valuable and their Marines taught us a great deal. The Marines' day consists of numerous combat patrols, constant interaction with the populace, holding shuras, and mentoring the Afghan National Army (ANA). Everything we do is partnered with the ANA, and they have proven to be very brave soldiers. We have executed several major operations in order to separate the enemy from the populace and provide the populace with the help they are requesting. The population is really responding to the compassionate actions of your Marines. The Marines have supervised many projects for the farmers of the area, from wells to schools.

The terrain here consists of thousands of canals and waterways. The people generally live in mud houses, like adobes, with no electricity or plumbing. The weather has been very nice, with the exception of occasional heavy rain.

We have started to receive an influx of mail which has kept morale high and have occasional access to email/satellite



phones. We think about our families constantly, and the thought of you is what keeps us strong. The first month has gone very fast, and I am sure the rest will go quicker.

Please remember, you are the reason our service is so important to us and we draw strength from your love.

Semper Fidelis,

LtCol J.D. Harrill

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2/8 AMERICA'S BATTALION

H&S Co. News

H&S Company

We would first like to thank the families for all the support they've given us prior to and during our current deployment overseas. Without the families, we would not be nearly as successful as we have been thus far. We recognize that it is the family that holds our fighting spirit together, and you are a big reason why we fight for freedom and democracy.

The Marines of H&S Company would like to extend our prayers to the Collins family, as Lance Corporal Collins recovers from his injuries he received over here in Afghanistan. If the family needs anything, please contact the FRO and she will tell you how to get in touch with myself or First Sergeant LaFountain.

After one and a half months, the company is settling in to the everyday battle rhythm, and I must say your Marines are doing an outstanding job. We are reaching out to local villages that have never seen support from other units so far, and the efforts have been paying off for the Battalion.

We would like to personally say congratulations to the following Marines who have either been promoted in the month of January or February: GySgt Rodriguez (Meritorious promotion for being selected as the Career Planner of the Year), SSgt Sills (S-4), Sgt Richards (Company Office), Cpl Yerdon (S-3), Cpl Marchalleck (S-6), LCpl Whitman (S-6), LCpl Mckenney (S-6), LCpl Martin (ETT), LCpl Macklin (S-6), LCpl Lopezromero (S-6), LCpl Head (Supply), Pfc King (Motor T).

We ask that you use discretion when making posts on Facebook pertaining to injuries or other private matters. Making posts on public websites about our operations or injuries may put many Marines at risk. Remember, posting information about injuries that may or may not be true will only cause undue stress on family member. We thank you for your support in this matter.

Lastly, we would like to congratulate the Fisher family on their Baby Girl born on February 13th, and the Foresteire family on their baby Boy born February 20th.

Again, thank you for your continued support,

S. P. Van Boening
Company Commander

Fox Co. News

Greetings from KES/BDQ Afghanistan-

The Marines of Patriot Company have been doing an outstanding job for the past month and a half learning the terrain, civilians and enemy throughout our area. Their tactical acumen, attention to detail, concern for their brother Marines and care for the local population has been noteworthy and definitely noticed by enemy and ally alike throughout the battlespace. We are set up in our patrol bases and combat outposts, and have built valuable and lasting relationships with our Afghan Army counterparts and local elders and civilians. You should be proud at how professional and mature your Marines are in protecting and helping the locals, while at the same time being heroic in the face of the enemy. I have operated with every Marine in Fox Company, and there is not a finer Rifle Company in the Marine Corps. Ist Sgt Breland and I are working to ensure that your Marines can call and contact you as often as possible, and I think that you should see a noticeable increase in the frequency of calls home. Keep sending your mail, as the letters and packages are arriving as fast as two weeks in some cases. I want to thank you for the service that you are providing to our Country, and your Marines are grateful for your support.

In your service, Captain AR Sacchetti

Echo Co. News

Friends and Families of Echo Company,

The Company has moved into our temporary homes in Sangin. The living conditions are Spartan, but good. Most of the Marines live in Platoon sized Patrol Bases without power, running water, or heat however, the warm clothes and sleeping bags do a good job at keeping us warm. Even though we miss 2/8, 3/5 has treated us extremely well.

Right now your Marines have two satellite telephones for all two hundred of them, so their ability to call home is limited, and most of them have no way to e-mail or communicate electronically. We have an MWR suite, which will include phones and computers, that we are working to get installed to give much better connectivity. We have also picked up quite a bit of mail from the OPs, but it takes about 6 weeks to receive mail here, so I would expect that you will receive the letters about the same time we get the phone and internet services working. The rain has been a burden over the last few days, however the sun is now out, and beginning to dry us out.

I am constantly humbled by your Marines' dedication to one another, and to the mission. They make miracles every day, and I am truly honored to serve with them. I know they look forward to being reunited with you, however their focus on the mission at hand is paying dividends. I look forward to returning your fine young men to you.

Semper Fidelis,

G. Baker, Commanding Officer, Company E. 2nd Battalion 8th Marine Regiment.

Golf Co. News

GUARDIAN NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Dear friends and families of Golf Company,

The Company First Sergeant and I could not be more proud of the men of Golf Company. We have always had high expectations of our Marines and they continue to surpass our expectations with their superior performance. We are currently firmly entrenching ourselves in our AO with our ANA brothers. We have been irritating the enemy as we continue to hunt him down and drive him away from the local villagers and farmers in order to give the locals the ability to make the choice to support their government. There is much progress to be made here and it will continue to be challenging work for all of us, but I truly believe we are making a difference here.

The men are living in austere positions on the edge of the frontier and thriving there. Just like Marines of the past 235 years have done, the men of this company are living up to the legacy of our Corps. The local people here truly could have no better men protecting their freedom.

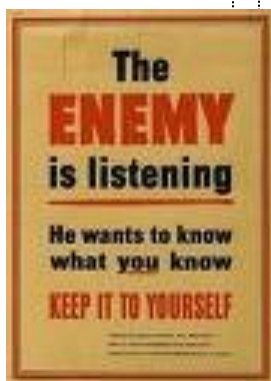
The Marines are appreciative of the mail and packages they receive as well as the heartfelt support that you provide every day. As I told you before, you have the most difficult job in the Marine Corps and we ALL appreciate what you do for us at home to allow us to do what we must over here. The Marines are honestly writing the next chapter in the history of the United States Marine Corps.

Cpl Rickert (Weapons Plt), Cpl Hill (2nd Plt) and Cpl Richard (3rd Plt) were promoted Combat Meritoriously. It's an honor to be promoted to any rank meritoriously, but to receive it in combat is an even higher honor. We are all extremely proud of our new Non Commissioned Officers and look forward to their continued distinguished performance.

We miss all of you tremendously,

Captain F. Mease

Guardian 6



Weapons Co. News

Families and Friends,

The Marines and Sailors of Weapons Company, Task Force 2/8 continue to serve their country with distinction, and every family should be proud of their efforts and results. We have all arrived safely and started getting right to work. Our advance party has paved the way for our success as elements of our company are dispatched in support of our MEF's battle space, but we continue to remain focused on "one team--one fight". With all changes and moving around it has been great to hear from home, the Marines and Sailors of Weapons Company thank the families for all of the care packages and mail.

The 81mm Mortar Platoon began patrolling and training with their Afghan National Army partners; preparing them to assume responsibility for their battle space. The Afghan National Army continues to improve and take more responsibility for security thanks to the combined efforts of training and mentoring by both the 81mm Mortar Platoon and the battalion Advisor Team.

The two Mobile Assault Platoons have fallen on a large amount of equipment and area of operation. The two Mobile Assault Platoons comprise the newly formed Mobile Assault Company in support of interdiction operations within the Battalion's Area of Operation. Through the Marines and Sailors efforts conducting interdiction patrols and surge missions to reinforce the companies, the Mobile Assault Company will form a protective boundary around the battalion.

The Sniper Platoon is providing outstanding service in their respective AORs. These Marines provide more than long range direct fire, their observation and reconnaissance skills have proven invaluable to the company commanders, influencing the battlefield significantly.

The Weapons Company Headquarters continues to serve as jacks of all trades, influencing the battlefield through Information Operations, non-kinetic effects, and the Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) within the Battalion's Combat Operation Center. All Marines and Sailors remain focused and committed in making this deployment a safe and as successful as possible. Thank You for the continued support!

Parent Network

Hello 2/8 parents and families,

Recently I mentioned that my Marine had decided to end his active service and come home to finish the college degree that he started before entering the Marine Corps. Well, he made it home and has already visited Bowling Green State University to see what he needs to do to enroll and be ready for classes when the new semester starts in a few weeks. The folks at Veteran's Affairs seem to be backed up so we are hoping they can get things done so his GI Bill is ready to go in a few weeks. Grrrr...I didn't think that would be an issue!!!

One of the conditions of being a Parent Advisor is having an active duty Marine or Sailor in the battalion so that means I must turn my duties over to another parent. I'm very happy to tell you LtCol Harrill has selected a new Advisor, M, to assume the reins of the 2/8 Parent Network.

I couldn't be more pleased. I know many of you already know M. She is not a stranger to our parents who were here during the last deployment. She reached out with support so many times and with so many families. If you are a newer parent or family member, Monica had been a moderator on the Proboard through the last deployment and, as I mentioned earlier, has been an eager and trusted member of the 2/8 team. If you look at her avatar on the Proboard, you'll see that she is not only a Marine Mom...she's a Marine mom times two. You'll hear from her soon.

As I look back over the past two years, I've been so honored and privileged to be able to do this. I've received much more than I've given and have so many people I to thank. Certainly LtCol Cabaniss is at the top of the list for asking me to be the Parent Advisor and having the trust to allow us to do the things we've done. Can't you imagine trusting hundreds of wild and crazy parents of Marines and sailors? Well, he did trust us and we are very thankful that he did. Introducing the Proboard had to be a scary thought but he approved it. The Proboard was the tool that allowed us to communicate and the rest is history. We shared information and support with people we had never met in person but we knew we were part of the same family. We were there to support our sons, our heroes, and each other. We cried together, prayed together and laughed out loud in front of our computer screens when we read some of the hilarious posts.

We had the support of our battalion Family Readiness Officer. Her support and assistance was invaluable. We all owe her a huge thank you as she gave us her time on top of all her other duties. You can look forward to her experience and assistance moving into the upcoming deployment.

Appreciation must also go to LtCol Harrill for accepting us, trusting us, and allowing our network to move forward for this next deployment. We need to respect his trust by remembering the simple OPSEC rules as we gear up for and continue to support each other through this upcoming deployment.

I have so many great memories from the families I've met through the network. We all have to feel good and send out an OORAH to a mom in Virginia who got her whole community involved and sent countless boxes to the Marines and Sailors and to the moms who gathered donations that led to Operation Homecoming and the fun we had putting 600 or 700 baskets of treats and homecoming items together for our heroes return to home to Camp Lejeune. And yes, there were sad times and the parents of 2/8 were so considerate and supportive during those times, too. Indeed, we are a family with many individuals who have contributed; that's the real reason our Parent Network has been so successful. Your unselfish efforts have been and will be a true blessing in achieving our ultimate goal... supporting our Marines and Sailors. Once a Marine, always a Marine. Once a Marine parent, always a Marine parent. My wife and I will always consider ourselves 2/8 parents.

I will really miss my role as parent advisor but you and the 2/8 Marines and Sailors will all remain in our thoughts and prayers as I turn you over to the very capable M who will continue the tradition, build upon it, and make it even better!

M, I tip my hat and hand the reins now to you and the rest of the 2/8 parents.

J— outgoing Parent Advisor

Family Readiness Officer

2/8 families,

Another month has passed, and while the unit is settling in, the families at home are just getting into a deployment routine. Routines are an essential part of the 'deployment toolbox' of any military family. Every family has a different way of dealing with the time our loved ones are away from us. Some of us have a monthly party, while others have a daily countdown. No matter how it is that you deal with the passing of time, routines are an important part of deployment. They allow us to have a sense of control in an environment where we sometimes feel like we have no control. This is why we try to have our meetings and events at the same time each month--it is also an easy way for us to mark the passing of time. Just think--only 6 more Family Days to go!!

The Family Readiness Office has been receiving inquiries concerning deployment pay. We have identified several Marines whose deployment pay has not been started. I have spoken to IPAC (Integrated Personnel and Administrative Center) and they are working on fixing the pay for those we have identified. If your Marine is not receiving deployment pay please contact me. I cannot start the pay, however, I will forward the information to the command so that they can work the issue. Pay will be backdated to the day the Marine arrived in Afghanistan.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions



W-2 and MyPay

W-2s are available on MyPay. This is the ONLY place you can obtain a copy of the W-2. If you do not have MyPay access, your Marine must provide his login and PIN to you.

If you need to reset the PIN, there are several steps:

1. You MUST have a Power of Attorney (POA) that authorizes you to make pay changes.
2. The FRO must receive an email from a 1stSgt or higher stating he has spoken to the Marine and that the Marine gives you authorization for you to reset the PIN.
3. Upon receipt of the email, the FRO will generate a letter from the command authorizing the PIN reset.
4. You MUST take a copy of the email, the letter, and the POA to IPAC (Installation Personnel Administration Center), in person, to reset the PIN. www.lejeune.usmc.mil/ipac/ for contact info and location.

ETT News

Dear Families and Friends of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines Army Advisor Team and Police Advisor Team,

I hope this message finds everyone well. Upfront, I want to say everyone is doing great. Since arriving in the area of operations (AO), the teams have hit the ground running. They are all attacking their missions with enthusiasm. The day to day activities include building rapport with our counterparts, learning all the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) procedures, training the ANA and AUP, and conducting partnered security missions. I couldn't ask for better Marines and Sailors to accomplish these tasks. Everyone is performing magnificently. Our training has really prepared us for the unique role we play for the battalion. Our focus for the next month is validating the progress of our counterparts so we can prioritize our efforts for the future. The teams will also continue pushing their training plans and the staff mentors will build standard operating procedures for us to supervise. Progress is slow but we are making improvements across all areas.

Semper Fi,
Maj M. Van Echo, USMC

Deployment Entitlements

Family Separation Allowance	\$250.00
Imminent Danger/Hostile Fire Pay	\$225.00
Hardship Duty Pay	\$100.00
Deployed Per Diem (daily \$3.50 x 30 days)	\$105.00

Subsistence

Enlisted Rations	\$323.87
Officer Rations	\$223.04

HANDBOOK 2011

Health:

1. Drink plenty of water.
2. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar.
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants..
4. Live with the 3 E's -- Energy, Enthusiasm and Empathy
5. Make time to pray.
6. Play more games
7. Read more books than you did in 2010 .
8. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day
9. Sleep for 7 hours.
10. Take a 10-30 minutes' walk daily. And while you walk, smile.

Personality:

11. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
12. Don't have negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment.

13. Don't overdo. Keep your limits.
14. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
15. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip.
16. Dream more while you are awake.
17. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
18. Forget issues of the past. Don't remind your partner with His/her mistakes of the past. That will ruin your present happiness.
19. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone. Don't hate others.
20. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
21. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
22. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum that appear and fade away like algebra class but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
23. Smile and laugh more.
24. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree...

Society:

25. Call your family often.
26. Each day give something good to others.
27. Forgive everyone for everything.
28. Spend time with people over the age of 70 & under the age of 6.
29. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
30. What other people think of you is none of your business.
31. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.

Life:

32. Do the right thing!
33. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
34. However good or bad a situation is, it will change..
35. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
36. The best is yet to come..
37. Your Inner most is always happy.

So, be happy.

Chaplain's Corner

Thank you for your service.

All of us in uniform have heard that from time to time, especially if we're in public in uniform. Most sincerely mean it, yet it becomes old to us after we've heard it 100 times.

Usually when someone says that to me I think, "No. Thank my kids. Thank my wife. I volunteered for this, they didn't."

The Marines and Sailors of 2/8 are doing the very thing we joined to do; we're actually practicing our craft, doing our job. We miss our families and our children but at least we're doing what we've been trained to do. For you, those whom we love, this is the worst part of the job, not the best. So, with most of the deployment still ahead of us: Thank You.

Thanks for the packages, thanks for the letters, thanks for the prayers, thanks for taking the kids to soccer, thanks for paying the bills...thanks for loving us. We could not do this without your support.

Semper Fidelis,
LCDR N. Solomon, USN
America's Chaplain

Are YOU expecting?

Do you need
child care?



If so, we recommend placing your unborn child on the waiting list for child care immediately! By registering now, your wait list will be minimized. Infants must be at least six weeks old to enter child care.

Come see the Children, Youth & Teen Programs Resource and Referral office located in Midway Park at the Marine & Family Services Annex building, on the corner of Butler and 3rd street.

For more information,
call 449-9552 or 449-9563.



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- ❖ Swedish/Relaxation \$60 (60 min.)
- ❖ Swedish/Relaxation \$85 (90 min.)
- ❖ Therapeutic/Deep Tissue \$70 (60 min.)
- ❖ Therapeutic/Deep Tissue \$100 (90 min.)

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CALL JULIANA NORRIS
License #7381

910-375-5420



Family Readiness Office

Contact Information

Family Readiness Office

(8910) 451-7836

Family Readiness Officer

(910) 382-0370

Deputy Family Readiness Officer

(910) 376-5276

UPCOMING EVENTS

March

10th—Family Readiness Meeting

13th—Family Day Mardi Gras

15th—Kids N Deployment

24t/25h In the Midst. Las Vegas

Theme or Bloom where you are
Planted

April

14th—Family Readiness Meeting

16th—Eggstravanganza

Taxes

For tax information:

www.irs.gov/individuals/military/index.html

Deployed service members are entitled to a 180-day extension on filing their taxes. Contact your accountant or

www.militaryonesource.com for more information.

Web Links

www.marineparents.com

Communicate with other parents, find great poems and stories, and search Marine Corps information

www.usmc.mil

Official website for the Marine Corps

www.mccslejeune.com

Marine Corps Community Services information for Camp Lejeune

www.lejeune.usmc.mil

Official website for Camp Lejeune

www.ucci.com

United Concordia dental insurance, Tricare's dental provider

www.tricare.osd.mil

Official website for Tricare

www.commissaries.com

Find a commissary, make shopping list, and get information on upcoming sales

www.dfas.mil

Military pay, moving allowances, BAH rates, and more

www.deploymentlink.osd.mil

Deployment health support

www.nmcrs.org

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

www.redcross.org

American Red Cross

<http://www.lifelines.usmc.mil>

Military information

www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/

Military HOMEFRONT

www.militaryonesource.com

One-stop website to find a multitude of military information and resources